

+ EASTER SUNDAY

April 5, 2026

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Resurrexi, et adhuc tecum sum...I arose, and am still with thee, Alleluia (Introit).

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
My very dear sons,

Some thoughts are too rich to be contained within the narrow confines of human words. Some events too are beyond our telling, exceeding even the language of angels. The happenings of Easter morning belong to this category. Gone now are the great discourses that gripped the Apostles' attention during the Last Supper—especially Jesus' High Priestly Prayer; ended are the impassioned speeches that our Lord's enemies multiplied like so many dark clouds before Pilate and Herod on Good Friday. All here, on this morning of Christ's rising from the dead, is brief and pointing to things outside the realm of normal human existence. The Lord has truly passed "to the other side of things". His words are few but transparent like Divine crystal.

Nothing will ever be the same. Jesus speaks now with a greater simplicity and density of meaning. That is why a few words suffice. "Do not be afraid," He says to the holy women, "go and tell my brothers that they must leave for Galilee; they will see me there."¹ That is all. One word, her own name, suffices to bring Mary Magdalen to the realization of the Resurrection: "Mary," says the Master, with the simplicity of divine and human closeness. "She knew Him," explains the evangelist, "and said to Him in Hebrew, 'Rabboni!'" In other encounters, the Lord will use the expression, "Peace be with you." "Peace": that word alone, despite the fewness of syllables, says it all when uttered by the Risen Jesus.

There is another Easter-morning word, more powerful even and dense with life than the word "peace." It bathes in the light of Heaven. It is the word we have been forbidden to utter ever since Septuagesima Sunday, but which now resounds freely in our liturgical chants and prayers. This is the "Alleluia", which means in Hebrew "God be praised." It is a rather unique word, a special word. A heresiarch of the fourth century, Vigilantius, convinced of this fact, but in a wrong way, wanted it to be employed only on the day of Easter. The Church is much more generous, however, providing countless occasions for its liturgical use. Along with the word "Amen," it will echo throughout eternity, as Dom Paul Delatte points out. In this word the joy of earth and the joy of Heaven are joined together in a holy embrace.

Better still, Alleluia is a word that should be sung. As Saint Augustine famously stated, "to sing is proper to the lover" and "whoever sings [prayers] prays twice." Alleluia is an expression of love in its rarest and most complete form. That is why we sing it so often.

¹ Mtt. 28: 10.

Singing, [explained Pope Benedict XVI in his day], indicates that the person is passing beyond the boundaries of the merely rational and falling into a kind of ecstasy. (That is why overly rational people are seldom tempted to sing.) Now singing finds its climactic form in the Alleluia . . . In fact, we are dealing here with something that cannot be translated. The Alleluia is simply the nonverbal expression in song of a joy that requires no words because it transcends all words. The Alleluia is like a first revelation of what can and shall someday take place in us – our entire being shall turn into a single immense joy.

But what if you cannot sing? Well, the song in this case does not have to be sung in strict conformity with the laws of music as practiced on earth. The song of the *Alleluia* is really a spiritual canticle, rather than something that must match the tuning fork. If you have the right spirit in it, your soul will be on pitch for the ears of Angels and for those of God. In the world it seems that there is a device now that automatically adjusts the voice of a singer through a microphone to adjust it the correct pitch, to put the singer in tune. If a blind electronic device can do this, how much better the Holy Spirit!

In the days of Our Lord the pilgrims would sing as they approached Jerusalem. They would sing the “Hallel” consisting of six psalms having Alleluia as their title. This is like a spelling out of all that is contained in the word “Alleluia.” We too are pilgrims who sing, but our pilgrimage is to the heavenly Jerusalem, the perfect Holy City that Saint John contemplated in his Apocalypse. “And I, John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”² We too must sing the Alleluia and the Hallel, but in the light of the New and Everlasting Covenant in Christ’s blood, in the blood of the Lamb that was slain, but who is living forever. How much better is our canticle! As we sang in the procession awhile ago:

Salve, festa dies, toto venerabilis aevo, qua deus infernum vicit et astra tenet
Hail, thou festive, ever venerable day, whereon hell is conquered and Heaven is won by Christ!

Amen. Alleluia.

² Apoc. 21:2